



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Washington, DC 20546

Procurement Notice

PN 04-61
June 21, 2011

NASA FAR SUPPLEMENT 1815.305 and 1815.370 COST/PRICE EVALUATION

BACKGROUND: In response to requests for clarification, this PN revises the NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) sections 1815.305 and 1815.370 to: 1) clarify the level of detail required in performing cost/price evaluations in source selections; 2) eliminate the requirement to establish and assess a level of confidence in the probable cost assessment for each proposal; and 3) reinforce the requirement to identify and document how the probable cost was derived and any related issues. The NASA Source Selection Guide was also revised to reflect these NFS revisions.

ACQUISITIONS AFFECTED BY CHANGES: The changes are applicable to acquisitions identified in 1815.300-70 for which a final solicitation has not been issued.

ACTION REQUIRED BY CONTRACTING OFFICERS: Advise all SEB participants of the revisions in NFS 1815.305 and 1815.370, the resultant changes in the Source Selection Guide used during the source selection evaluation process, and the effects these changes have on their cognizant roles and responsibilities.

CLAUSE CHANGES: None.

PARTS AFFECTED: Part 1815.

REPLACEMENT PAGES: You may use the enclosed pages to replace 15:9, 15:10, 15:11, 15:12, 15:17, and 15:18 of the NFS.

TYPE OF RULE AND PUBLICATION DATE: These changes do not have a significant effect beyond the internal operating procedures of NASA and do not have a significant cost or administrative impact on contractors or offerors, and therefore do not require codification in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) or publication for public comment.

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Enclosures

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PN List

(2) The RFP shall instruct offerors to submit data (including data from relevant Federal, State, and local governments and private contracts) that can be used to evaluate their past performance. Typically, the RFP will require:

(i) A list of contracts similar in size, content, and complexity to the instant acquisition, showing each contract number, the type of contract, a brief description of the work, and a point of contact from the organization placing the contract. Normally, the requested contracts are limited to those received in the last three years. However, in acquisitions that require longer periods to demonstrate performance quality, such as hardware development, the time period should be tailored accordingly.

(ii) The identification and explanation of any cost overruns or underruns, completion delays, performance problems, and terminations.

(3) The contracting officer may start collecting past performance data before proposal receipt. One method for early evaluation of past performance is to request offerors to submit their past performance information in advance of the proposal due date. The RFP could also include a past performance questionnaire for offerors to send their previous customers with instructions to return the completed questionnaire to the Government. Failure of the offeror to submit its past performance information early or of the customers to submit the completed questionnaires shall not be a cause for rejection of the proposal nor shall it be reflected in the Government's evaluation of the offeror's past performance.

(4) The contracting officer shall evaluate the offeror's past performance in occupational health, security, safety, and mission success (e.g., mishap rates and problems in delivered hardware and software that resulted in mishaps or failures) when these areas are germane to the requirement.

1815.305 Proposal evaluation.

(a) Each proposal shall be evaluated to identify and document:

(i) Any deficiencies;

(ii) All strengths and weaknesses. These findings will include a description of how each strength and weakness will impact performance in terms of benefit or risk statements;

(iii) The numerical score and/or adjectival rating of each Mission Suitability subfactor, if applicable;

(iv) Cost realism, if appropriate;

(v) The Past Performance evaluation factor; and

(vi) Any programmatic risk to mission success, e.g., technical, schedule, cost, safety, occupational health, security, export control, or environmental. Risks may result from the offeror's technical approach, manufacturing plan, selection of materials, processes, equipment, or as a result of the cost, schedule, and performance impacts associated with its approach. Risk evaluations must consider the probability of the risk occurring, the impact and severity of the risk, the timeframe when the risk should be addressed, and the alternatives available to meet the requirements. Risk assessments shall be captured as part of strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and numerical or adjectival ratings. Identified risks and the potential for cost impact shall be considered in the cost or price evaluation.

(a)(1) Cost or price evaluation.

(A) Cost or pricing data shall not be requested in competitive acquisitions. See 1815.403-1(b)(1) and 1815.403-3(b).

(B) When contracting on a basis other than firm-fixed-price, the contracting officer shall perform price and cost realism analyses to assess the reasonableness and realism of the proposed costs. A cost realism analysis will determine if the costs in an offeror's proposal meet all of the following:

- (a)** Are realistic for the work to be performed,
- (b)** Reflect a clear understanding of the requirements, and
- (c)** Are consistent with the various elements of the offeror's technical proposal.

(C) The analysis shall, to the extent appropriate for the acquisition, include:

(a) The probable cost to the Government of each proposal, including any recommended additions or reductions in materials, equipment, labor hours, direct rates, and indirect rates. Any adjustments in direct and indirect costs, other than minor computation errors, must be fully explained and documented and, where applicable, traceable to the technical evaluation. The probable cost should reflect the Government's best estimate based on cost resulting from the offeror's proposal after all known adjustments have been considered.

(b) The differences between the probable cost and offeror's proposed costs regarding business methods, operating procedures, and practices as they affect cost.

(a)(2) Past performance evaluation.

(A) The Past Performance evaluation assesses the contractor's performance under previously awarded contracts. The past performance evaluation shall be in accordance with FAR 15.305(a)(2) and this section. When applying the definitions below to arrive at a confidence rating, the SEB's evaluation shall clearly document each Offeror's relevant past performance (e.g. currency/recency, size, content and complexity) to assess the Offeror's overall confidence rating assigned. The past performance evaluation is an assessment of the Government's confidence in the offeror's ability to perform the solicitation requirements. Past Performance shall be evaluated for each offeror using the following levels of confidence ratings:

Very High Level of Confidence

The Offeror's relevant past performance is of exceptional merit and is very highly pertinent to this acquisition; indicating exemplary performance in a timely, efficient, and economical manner; very minor (if any) problems with no adverse effect on overall performance. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a very high level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort. ** (One or more significant strengths exist. No significant weaknesses exist.)

High Level of Confidence

The Offeror's relevant past performance is highly pertinent to this acquisition; demonstrating very effective performance that would be fully responsive to contract requirements with contract requirements accomplished in a timely, efficient, and economical manner for the most part with only minor problems with little identifiable effect on overall performance. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a high level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort. ** (One or more significant strengths exist. Strengths outbalance any weakness.)

Moderate Level of Confidence

The Offeror's relevant past performance is pertinent to this acquisition, and it demonstrates effective performance; fully responsive to contract requirements; reportable problems, but with

little identifiable effect on overall performance. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a moderate level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort. ** (There may be strengths or weaknesses, or both.)

Low Level of Confidence

The Offeror's relevant past performance is at least somewhat pertinent to this acquisition, and it meets or slightly exceeds minimum acceptable standards; adequate results; reportable problems with identifiable, but not substantial, effects on overall performance. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a low level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort. Changes to the Offeror's existing processes may be necessary in order to achieve contract requirements. ** (One or more weaknesses exist. Weaknesses outbalance strengths.)

Very Low Level of Confidence

The Offeror's relevant past performance does not meet minimum acceptable standards in one or more areas; remedial action required in one or more areas; problems in one or more areas which, adversely affect overall performance. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a very low level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort. ** (One or more deficiencies or significant weaknesses exist.)

Neutral

In the case of an Offeror without a record of relevant past performance or for whom information on past performance is not available, the Offeror may not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on past performance [see FAR 15.305(a) (2) (ii) and (iv)].

** (At the Installations' discretion strengths and weaknesses may be assigned.)

(B) The evaluation may be limited to specific areas of past performance considered most germane for the instant acquisition. It may include any or all of the items listed in FAR 42.1501, and/or any other aspects of past performance considered pertinent to the solicitation requirements or challenges. Regardless of the areas of past performance selected for evaluation, the same areas shall be evaluated for all offerors in that acquisition.

(C) Questionnaires and interviews may be used to solicit assessments of the offeror's performance, as either a prime or subcontractor, from the offeror's previous customers.

(D) All pertinent information, including customer assessments and any offeror rebuttals, will be made part of the source selection records and addressed in the evaluation of past performance.

(a)(3) Technical Evaluation.

(A) Mission Suitability subfactors shall be evaluated using the following adjectival ratings, definitions, and percentile ranges.

ADJECTIVAL RATING	DEFINITIONS	PERCENTILE RANGE
Excellent	A comprehensive and thorough proposal of exceptional merit with one or more significant strengths. No	91-100

	deficiency or significant weakness exists.	
Very Good	A proposal having no deficiency and which demonstrates over-all competence. One or more significant strengths have been found, and strengths outbalance any weaknesses that exist.	71-90
Good	A proposal having no deficiency and which shows a reasonably sound response. There may be strengths or weaknesses, or both. As a whole, weaknesses not off-set by strengths do not significantly detract from the offeror's response.	51-70
Fair	A proposal having no deficiency and which has one or more weaknesses. Weaknesses outbalance any strengths.	31-50
Poor	A proposal that has one or more deficiencies or significant weaknesses that demonstrate a lack of overall competence or would require a major proposal revision to correct.	0-30

(B) When contracting on a cost reimbursement basis, a cost realism analysis shall be performed consistent with FAR 15.404-1(d).

(a)(4) The cost or price evaluation, specifically the cost realism analysis, often requires a technical evaluation of the proposed costs elements. Contracting officers may provide technical evaluators a copy of the cost volume or relevant information from it to use in the analysis.

(b) The contracting officer is authorized to make the determination to reject all proposals received in response to a solicitation.

1815.305-70 Identification of unacceptable proposals.

(a) The contracting officer shall not complete the initial evaluation of any proposal when it is determined that the proposal is unacceptable because:

(1) It does not represent a reasonable initial effort to address the essential requirements of the RFP or clearly demonstrates that the offeror does not understand the requirements;

(2) In research and development acquisitions, a substantial design drawback is evident in the proposal, and sufficient correction or improvement to consider the proposal acceptable would require virtually an entirely new technical proposal; or

(3) It contains major deficiencies or omissions or out-of-line costs which discussions with the offeror could not reasonably be expected to cure.

(b) The contracting officer shall document the rationale for discontinuing the initial evaluation of a proposal in accordance with this section.

1815.305-71 Evaluation of a single proposal.

(a) If only one proposal is received in response to the solicitation, the contracting officer shall determine if the solicitation was flawed or unduly restrictive and determine if the single proposal

(i) Copies of individual worksheets and supporting comments to the lowest level evaluated;

(ii) An evaluation sheet summarized for the committee as a whole; and

(iii) A statement for each proposal describing any strengths, deficiencies, or significant weaknesses which significantly affected the evaluation and stating any reservations or concerns, together with supporting rationale, which the committee or any of its members want to bring to the attention of the SEB.

(3) The SEB process must be adequately documented. Clear traceability must exist at all levels of the SEB process. All reports submitted by committees or panels will be retained as part of the SEB records as outlined in paragraph (k).

(4) Each voting SEB member shall thoroughly review each proposal and any committee reports and findings. The SEB shall rate or score the proposals for each evaluation factor and subfactor according to its own collective judgment. SEB minutes shall reflect this evaluation process.

(h) SEB presentation.

(1) The SEB Chairperson shall brief the SSA on the results of the SEB deliberations to permit an informed and objective selection of the best source(s) for the particular acquisition.

(2) The presentation shall focus on the significant strengths, deficiencies, and significant weaknesses found in the proposals, the probable cost of each proposal, and any significant issues and problems identified by the SEB. This presentation must explain any applicable special standards of responsibility; evaluation factors and subfactors; the significant strengths and significant weaknesses of the offerors which includes a description of the benefits or risks associated with the significant findings; the Government independent cost estimate, if applicable; the offerors' proposed cost/price; the probable cost; the proposed fee arrangements; and the final adjectival ratings and scores to the subfactor level. The presentation to the SSA shall include the total mission suitability point score for each offeror's proposal. An adjectival rating (e.g. excellent, very good, etc.) shall be assigned for each mission suitability subfactor, but an adjectival rating shall not be assigned for the total mission suitability factor of each offeror's proposal. The SEB shall compute the total mission suitability point score by adding all of the mission suitability subfactors points assessed, with the maximum possible total mission suitability point score being 1000 points. The total mission suitability point score does not represent a precise measure of the relative merit of any one offeror's proposal, but rather it is to summarize the total points each offeror's proposal is assessed out of the possible 1000 points.

(3) Attendance at the presentation is restricted to people involved in the selection process or who have a valid need to know. The designated individuals attending the SEB presentation(s) shall:

(i) Ensure that the solicitation and evaluation processes complied with all applicable agency policies and that the presentation accurately conveys the SEB's activities and findings;

(ii) Not change the established evaluation factors, subfactors, weights, or scoring systems; or the substance of the SEB's findings. They may, however, advise the SEB to rectify procedural omissions, irregularities or inconsistencies, substantiate its findings, or revise the presentation.

(4) The SEB recorder will coordinate the formal presentation including arranging the time and place of the presentation, assuring proper attendance, and distributing presentation material.

(5) For Headquarters selections, the Headquarters Office of Procurement, Program Operations Division will coordinate the presentation, including approval of attendees. When the Administrator is the SSA, a preliminary presentation should be made to the head of the contracting activity and to the Official-in-Charge of the cognizant Headquarters Program Office.

(i) Recommended SEB presentation format.

(1) Identification of the Acquisition. Identifies the installation, the nature of the services or hardware to be acquired, some quantitative measure including the Government cost estimate for the acquisition, and the planned contractual arrangement. Avoids detailed objectives of the acquisition.

(2) Background. Identifies any earlier phases of a phased acquisition or, as in the case of continuing support services, identifies the incumbent and any consolidations or proposed changes from the existing structure.

(3) Evaluation Factors and Subfactors. Explains the evaluation factors, subfactor, and any special standards of responsibility. Lists the relative order of importance of the evaluation factors and the numerical weights of the Mission Suitability subfactors. Presents the adjectival scoring system used in the Mission Suitability and Past Performance evaluations.

(4) Sources. Indicates the number of offerors solicited and the number of offerors expressing interest (e.g., attendance at a preproposal conference). Identifies the offerors submitting proposals, indicating any small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, and women-owned businesses.

(5) Summary of Findings. Lists the initial and final Mission Suitability ratings and scores, the offerors' proposed costs/prices, and any assessment of the probable costs. Introduces any clear discriminator, problem, or issue which could affect the selection. Addresses any competitive range determination. List the adjectival rating (e.g. excellent, very good, etc.) assigned for each mission suitability subfactor for each offeror's proposal. List the total mission suitability point score for each offeror's proposal by adding all of the mission suitability subfactors points assessed out of the possible 1000 points.

(6) Significant Strengths, Deficiencies, and Significant Weaknesses of Offerors. Summarizes the SEB's findings, using the following guidelines:

(i) Present only the significant strengths, deficiencies, and significant weaknesses of individual offerors accompanied with a description of the benefits or risks associated with each discriminator.

(ii) Directly relate the significant strengths, deficiencies, and significant weaknesses to the evaluation factors, and subfactors.

(iii) Indicate the results and impact, if any, of discussions and FPRs on ratings and scores.

(7) Final Mission Suitability Ratings and Scores. Summarizes the evaluation subfactors, the maximum points achievable, and the scores of the offerors in the competitive range.

(8) Final Cost/Price Evaluation. Summarizes proposed costs/prices and any probable costs associated with each offeror including proposed fee arrangements. Presents the data as accurately as possible, showing SEB adjustments to achieve comparability. Identifies and documents all significant issues and remaining uncertainties with regard to the probable cost.

(9) Past Performance. Provides a summary of the assessed level of confidence associated with each offeror's proposal.

(10) Special Interest. Includes only information of special interest to the SSA that has not been discussed elsewhere, e.g., procedural errors or other matters that could affect the selection decision.